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MAY 16 1971

Charles Bartlett's notes

Nixon on blacks': deadline

WASHINGTON — President Nixon is making it a point to meet the deadline set by the 13 black legislators for an answer to their demands for more help to the urban poor. On Monday he will respond, item by item, to the 60 proposals advanced by the Black Caucus. He will not turn them all down, but he can't promise much because the cost of the blacks' program is estimated by budget officials at between \$87.5 million and \$105 million. The President is, however, eager to convince the Rockefeller wing of the GOP that he is sympathetic to the problems of the black minority.

Image remakers

THE WHITE HOUSE is still seeking solutions to what it regards as the President's image problem. A new assistant is being sought to serve as the domestic equivalent to John Scali, who is advising the President on how to improve his public relations in the foreign-policy area. Meanwhile, Charles Colson, a high-ranking aide, is collecting ideas on how to improve Mr. Nixon's projection on television.

Fly in ointment

THE PRESIDENT has been cautious in responding to solicitations from former President Lyndon B. Johnson for official participation in the Johnson Library dedication on May 22. Mr. Johnson asked him to fly some 500 of his guests down to Austin in Air Force jets, but the President, apprised that the cost of each plane would be \$8,000 out of his contingency fund, has so far balked. He is afraid there will be an adverse public reaction. So one group of 100 Johnson associates has chartered a Braniff Airlines plane, and others will go on regularly scheduled carriers.

Bees' needs

NATURE NOTES: The House just passed, without dissent, an administration proposal that beekeepers be awarded \$3.5 million in indemnity payments for damage done to their honey and bees by insecticides . . . White House gardeners, who developed a colorful array of flowering plants for table decorations in the Johnson era, are restrained now by Mrs. Nixon's taste. She has a strong preference for using only red flowers.

Pollution standards abroad

U.S. officials are working hard to impose U.S. pollution and safety standards on foreign countries so that U.S. manufacturers will not face a competitive disadvantage in foreign trade. A total of 11 U.S. ecology specialists flew to Prague last week for a conference on European pollution problems. Identical air-monitoring systems have been set up in St. Louis, Ankara and Frankfurt as part of a health study. The Japanese public's sudden concern with pollution promises that manufacturers there will not escape the added costs.

Bigger role for Helms?

Mr. Nixon has not decided how much of a reorganization he wants in the intelligence community, but it seems likely that he will give Richard Helms, Central Intelligence Agency director, some co-ordinating authority over budgets that pay for intelligence activities in the Defense Department. The President's agreement to have Helms address the editors convention here in April is taken as a sign that he means to move Helms into a more prominent role.